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ABSTRACT

Synthesizing research on writing instruction using word processors, this annotated bibliography contains 28 references of articles and papers in the ERIC database. The first section includes strategies, techniques, exercises, activities, and ideas on how to use time on a word processor most effectively. Articles and papers discussing the numerous benefits of word-processor use, including motivating students to spend more time on task and encouraging changes and rewriting, are presented in the section. The resources in the last section will be helpful in selecting word-processing programs and other kinds of instructional software. (MS)

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Word Processing and Writing Instruction

by Michael Shermis

While the research findings are still mixed, there is considerable evidence that word processing improves both the amount and quality of revision in student writing (Kurth, 1987). The ERIC database offers several articles and papers that support this finding. However, it must be pointed out that "word processing does not, in itself, teach revision." (Strickland, 1988) Many of the authors stress that computers are just a tool; instruction and encouragement are also needed to promote good writing. Focusing on editing and revision in writing instruction, this *FAST Bib* provides several sources that contain creative ideas and new computer strategies for teaching revision and using word processors in the classroom.

The first section includes strategies, techniques, exercises, activities, and ideas on how to use time on a word processor most effectively. Articles and papers discussing the numerous benefits of word processor use, including motivating students to spend more time on task and encouraging changes and rewriting, are presented in the second section. The resources in the last section will be helpful in selecting word-processing programs and other kinds of instructional software.

Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the *FAST Bib* format. The ED numbers for sources included in *Resources in Education* have been included to enable the user to go directly to microfiche collections, order from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), or go to *RIE* for the full abstract on those sources not available through EDRS. The citations to journals are from the *Current Index to Journals in Education*, and these articles can be acquired most economically from library collections or through interlibrary loans. Reprint services are also available from University Microfilms International (UMI) and from the Original Article Tearsheet Service (OATS) of the Institute for Scientific Information.

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Strategies, Techniques, and Exercises

Arms, Valarie M. "The Computer and the Process of Composition," *Pipeline*, v8 n1 p16-18 Spr 1983.

Focuses on the problems students have in prewriting, writing, and revising. Suggests solutions to these problems involve computer use and include making students aware of the composition process, writing strategies good writers use, audience analysis, grammar review, and the need for peer review.

Balajthy, Ernest. "Holistic Approaches to Reading," *Reading Teacher*, v42 n4 p324 Jan 1989.

Reflects the concern that children use computers in a social and purposeful context. Suggests that (1) teacher feedback for writing should be

provided during, not after, the writing process; (2) writing process curricula such as "Write Connection" and "Writing Workshop" provide prewriting, during writing, and postwriting guidance for students; and (3) "The Writing Notebook," a quarterly publication, offers a wealth of creative ideas for using word processors in the classroom.

Borgh, Karin; Dickson, W. Patrick. *The Effects on Children's Writing of Adding Speech Synthesis to a Word Processor*. Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Madison, 1986. 26 p. [ED 277 007]

Examines whether computers equipped with speech synthesis devices could facilitate children's writing. Finds that using a speech synthesizer led to increased levels of editing in young children.

Cronnell, Bruce. *Computer Instruction for Generating and Revising/Editing Narrative Text*. Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Los Alamitos, CA, 1982. 13 p. [ED 223 244]

Outlines a proposed procedure for using an interactive computer-based approach to assist students in composing text on a word processor.

Dollieslager, Rick. "Exercises for Writing Courses Using Word Processors," *Exercise Exchange*, v32 n1 p31-32 Fall 1986.

Presents three exercises that teach good proofreading and editing skills as well as tap students' creativity on the word processor.

Head, Susan D. "The Sweetwater Model for Writing Improvement." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Development of Computer-Based Instructional Systems, 1988. 16 p. [CS 211 613]

Describes a computer-assisted writing laboratory project integrating Model Curriculum Standards (teacher developed instructional literature guides integrating the reading of core pieces of literature with the writing process), the writing process, computer hardware and software, and staff development. Suggests that the project will allow students to complete a variety of writing assignments while enabling them to incorporate revision as a natural part of writing and allow the teachers to respond more to content and text-level issues.

Henney, Maribeth. *Reading and Computers—How Teachers Can Make Them Work Together*, 1984. 61 p. [ED 269 745]

Addresses some concerns regarding the use of computers in reading instruction. Explores the similarities and differences between reading printed materials and computer display screens (legibility, portability, etc.) and presents some advantages and disadvantages of computers. Describes two programs promoting the combined teaching of reading and writing—the "Bank Street Writer" and the "Story Tree" from Scholastic—and suggests 24 activities for use with these programs, including correcting misspellings, incorrect grammar, and punctuation; putting sentences in proper sequence; creative writing; and editing.

Mehan, Hugh; and others. "Research Currents: Knowledge of Text Editing and Control of Literacy Skills," *Language Arts*, v61 n5 p510-15 Sep 1984.

Discusses the potential of microcomputers for accomplishing educational goals beyond drill and practice software. Describes a program in which students have access to a computer-based network that connects classrooms in four states, which allows peer response, develops a sense of audience, and gives students greater control over their literacy development.

Pon, Kathy. "Process Writing in the One-Computer Classroom," *Computing Teacher*, v15 n6 p33-37 Mar 1988.

Suggests techniques for the efficient use of one word processor by many students by dividing the writing process into stages of prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing. Provides examples of exercises and evaluations, a guide to producing a book, and a list of publications that accept children's writing.

Rodrigues, Dawn; Rodrigues, Raymond J. *Teaching Writing with a Word Processor, Grades 7-13*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, IL, 1986. 87 p. [ED 268 547]

Describes how teachers can create computer lesson files for students that incorporate findings from research on effective writing instruction and allow students to develop, shape, and revise their own writing at the computer monitor.

Strickland, James. "Computer Strategies for Teaching Revision: It May Be Convenient, but It's Not Easy." Paper presented at the 78th Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, 1988. 18 p. [CS 211 617]

Contends that word processing does not, in itself, teach revision. Suggests that new computer strategies for teaching revision are needed—revision strategies that use the computer to reorganize, elaborate, and strengthen what has already been written.

Thiesmeyer, John. "Some Boundary Considerations for Writing-Software." Paper presented at the University of Minnesota Conference on "Computers and Writing: Research and Applications," 1984. 13 p. [ED 246 462]

Discusses the advantages and disadvantages of computerized spelling programs or "spelling checkers."

Thomas, Irene D. "Uses of the Computer in Teaching the Composing Process." 1985 Annual Report of the NCTE Committee on Instructional Technology. Paper presented at the 75th Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, 1985. 5 p. [ED 265 571]

Discusses the impact of technological advances on classroom instruction. Cites arguments against the use of word processing, including the position that word processing is difficult to learn and takes time away from writing instruction. Concludes that word processing is the best justification to date for using computers in the classrooms.

Wresch, William, ed. *The Computer in Composition Instruction: A Writer's Tool*. National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL, 1984. 218 p. [ED 247 602]

Contains articles on computer applications in writing instruction that deal with the areas of prewriting, editing and grammar, word-processing research and applications, and programs for the writing process.

Effects, Benefits of Word Processor Use

Crawford, Reg. "Inside Classrooms: Word Processing and the Fourth Grade Writer," *Canadian Journal of English Language Arts*, v11 n1 p42-46 1988.

Describes an experiment introducing a word processor as a tool for writing in a fourth-grade classroom. Discusses resulting effects on the writing process, especially revision and editing, and on attitudes toward collaborative efforts.

Dalton, David W.; Watson, James F. "Word Processing and the Writing Process: Enhancement or Distraction?" Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1986. 19 p. [ED 267 763]

Examines the effects of a year-long word-processing program on learners' holistic writing skills. Finds that relatively low achieving learners scored significantly better when using the word-processing treatment than low learners in the conventional treatment; however, word processing was not as effective in improving writing skills for the relatively high ability students.

Gula, Robert J. "Beyond the Typewriter: An English Teacher Looks at Word Processing," *Independent School*, v42 n3 p44-46 Feb 1983.

Discusses how word processors permit students to save time and effort in learning to write and allow instructors to be more demanding of students because revising and correcting take less time.

Jacoby, Adrienne. "Word Processing with the Elementary School Student—A Teaching and Learning Experience for Both Teachers and Students." Paper presented at the Spring Conference of the Delaware Valley Writing Council and Villanova University's English Department, 1984. 8 p. [ED 246 449]

Argues that using word processing in the elementary school writing curriculum is advantageous for both students and teachers. Contends that word processors motivate students to spend more time on task, encourage changes and rewriting, and eliminate concern for neatness and the tedium of writing (and rewriting) by hand. Lists management and teaching suggestions to make the program function smoothly.

Kurth, Ruth J. "Word Processing and Composition Revision Strategies." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1987. 16 p. [ED 283 195]

Examines whether the use of word processing improves both the amount and the quality of revision done by high school students. Finds that word processing programs enhanced writing instruction, and that the group using word processors wrote more substantial compositions than did the other group.

LeBlanc, Paul. "How to Get the Words Right: A Reappraisal of Word Processing and Revision,"

Computers and Composition, v5 n3 p29-42 Aug 1988.

Believes word processing has not created new revision strategies, only allowed those existing strategies to be more or less effective. A teacher's help is necessary for the computer to change a student's ability to revise.

Rosenbaum, Nina J. "Problems with Current Research in Writing Using the Microcomputer." Paper presented at the Spring Conference of the Delaware Valley Writing Council and Villanova University's English Department, 1984. 19 p. [ED 243 116]

Asserts that benefits from using the computer include (1) multiple copies of a draft can easily be printed for use in peer editing groups; (2) final drafts can be displayed without the stigma of poor handwriting; (3) the absence of handwriting encourages large revisions; and (4) revisions can be more easily done in stages, leaving writers free to concentrate on different aspects of revising at different times.

Schriner, Delores K. "Risk Taking, Revising, and Word Processing," *Computers and Composition*, v5 n3 p43-53 Aug 1988.

Finds word processing creates a favorable environment and that students are more inclined to take risks and experiment with revisions at higher levels, but that it did not lead to qualitatively better texts.

Stromberg, Linda; Kurth, Ruth J. "Using Word Processing to Teach Revision in Written Composition." Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, 1983. 11 p. [ED 241 953]

Examines whether the editing and text moving capabilities of word-processing programs can be useful in helping students revise more readily and skillfully. Finds that the students were very positive about their experiences with the word processing system. Suggests that the most usable word processing system for students is a Scholastic program called "Bank Street Writer," although the "Easy Script" also proved successful.

Tone, Bruce; Winchester, Dorothy. *Computer-Assisted Writing Instruction*. ERIC Digest Number 2, 1988. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN. 4 p. [ED 293 130]

Summarizes reports in the ERIC database on computer-assisted writing instruction. Finds that although computer-assisted writing instruction has some effect on both the quantity and quality of student writing, limited time-on-task does not assure students ample opportunity to use them.

Selected Word Processors

Leahy, Ellen K. "A Writing Teacher's Shopping and Reading List for Software," *English Journal*, v73 n1 p62-65 Jan 1984.

Describes new sources of word-processing, proofreading, and text-editing programs that can be used in hands-on computer sessions, analyzing writing samples for and with students.

Luchte, Jeanne. "Computer Programs in the Writing Center: A Bibliographical Essay," *Writing Center Journal*, v18 n1 p11-19 Fall-Win 1987.

Concentrates on reviewing literature on the use of computers to assist the composing process and the teaching of composing in the writing center. Deals with the following categories of software: (1) general; (2) prewriting; (3) organizing; (4) drafting; (5) revising; and (6) proofreading/ copy editing.

Oates, William R.; Oates, Rita Haugh. "Going beyond Word Processing: A Survey of Computer-Based Approaches for Writing Instruction." Paper presented at the 70th Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1987. 21 p. [ED 286 186]

Surveys computer approaches and appropriate software for effective writing instruction, including prewriting software, composing tools, editing and revising approaches, and instructional software for writing skills. Also reviews new areas related to computer technology—desktop publishing, telecommunications, and electronic bulletin boards.

Piazza, Carolyn L; Dawson, Joel C. "Choosing a Word Processor for Writing Instruction," *Computers, Reading and Language Arts*, v2 n1 p10-12 Sum-Fall 1984.

Presents specific practical suggestions about evaluating and selecting word-processing programs and text-editing programs for students learning to write on microcomputers.

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